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# The New Amberola **GRAPHIC**

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# The New Amberola Graphic

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## A New Millennium?

Well to be precise, not exactly, but who's keeping score? Let's just say that the year 2000 starts a new era and celebrate it!

This issue is being printed the last week of December 1999. By the time you receive it, it should be clear whether or not the entire system crashed, whether terrorism prevailed, and whether or not Jesus returned! My forecast is that all of these extreme predictions for the turning of the year do not come about, and life will continue to go on in our great country just about the way it always has.

Happy New Year!

- M.F.B.

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readers did not receive the last issue because they failed to notify us of a change in their address.

Don't let this happen to you! Let us know when you move (second class mail does not get forwarded automatically).

# Tom Burke

## *"The Lancashire Caruso"*

by Neil Corning

Although Mario Lanza played "The Great Caruso" in the movie of that name, those of us who enjoy fine singing know he was far from another Enrico Caruso. Many have been compared, but very few really measure up.

One who did compare, in several major aspects, was an English tenor, Tom Burke. During his lifetime he was billed as "England's Greatest Tenor" or alternatively "The Lancashire Caruso."

As a young man, Burke idolized Caruso after hearing him sing in a concert at Blackpool, thirty miles from his home town – a concert to which Tom walked, I might add! He vowed then and there to study and train and someday sing like his idol.

Some time later, Burke sang at an audition at which Enrico Caruso himself was present. After his singing Caruso said to the young Tom, "In the days to come you will wear my mantle." Caruso advised Burke to study and gain experience. He also suggested that Burke go to Italy, for he sensed that the voice was extraordinary. Burke followed Caruso's suggestions.

At this point I should like to note the amazing similarities in the physical builds of both Burke and Caruso. Also noticeable was the size and shape of their heads in relation to their torsos.

But the real similarity came in the size of the voice. Tom Burke's vocal timbre was amazing. On each of his records you can hear just below the surface a tremendous reserve of vocal power. And when he does let it out – wow!

Tom Burke's great initial success in Great Britain was stunning. Nellie Melba chose him to be her leading tenor at the first opening night at Covent Garden after World War I ("The Peace Season"). As a result, Burke was offered a Covent Garden contract. Britains clamored for more by one of their home grown singers. Concerts and recordings followed. Fame---recognition. But what happened? Tom Burke

simply couldn't handle it. He drank, he womanized, he missed engagements.

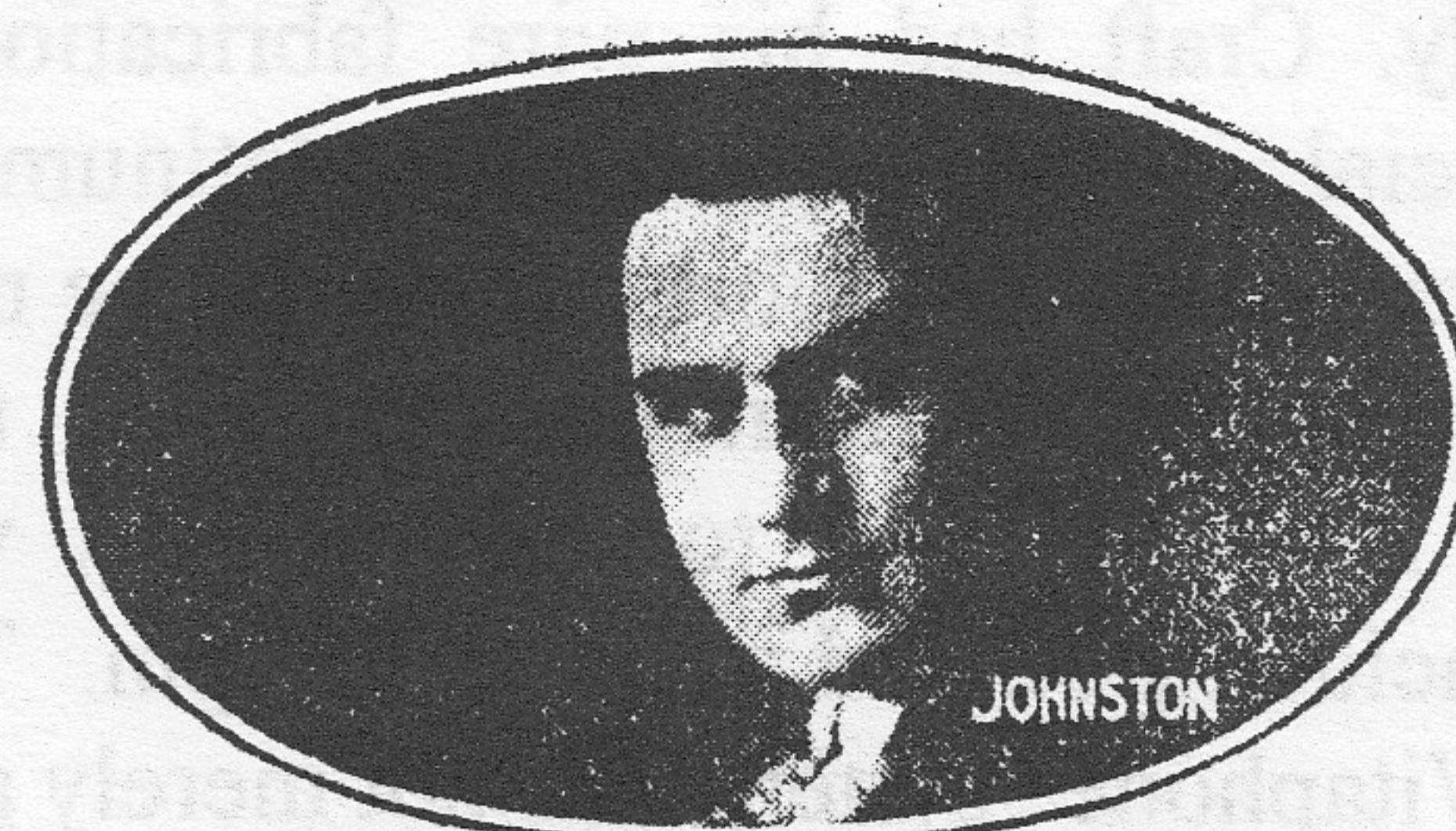
He made one disastrous tour of the U.S. While singing extremely well he had the misfortune to be promoted by an agent who billed him because of his Irish heritage as "The World's Greatest Irish Tenor." Needless to say, fans of John McCormack, who by this time had an enormous following in the U.S., boycotted and protested his appearance. A public relations nightmare!

Tom returned to England where during the 1920s his fortunes continued to rise and fall. Promoters refused to book or promote him. He was deemed unreliable. He recorded under pseudonyms to make more money (Terry O'Neill). He made movies, performed in small theaters and halls, but never again did his star rise to the heights it could have. Tom Burke simply lacked the self-discipline to promote his own talent. He spent his last years teaching voice and advocating for a British National Opera Company. In the fall of 1960, Tom Burke died.

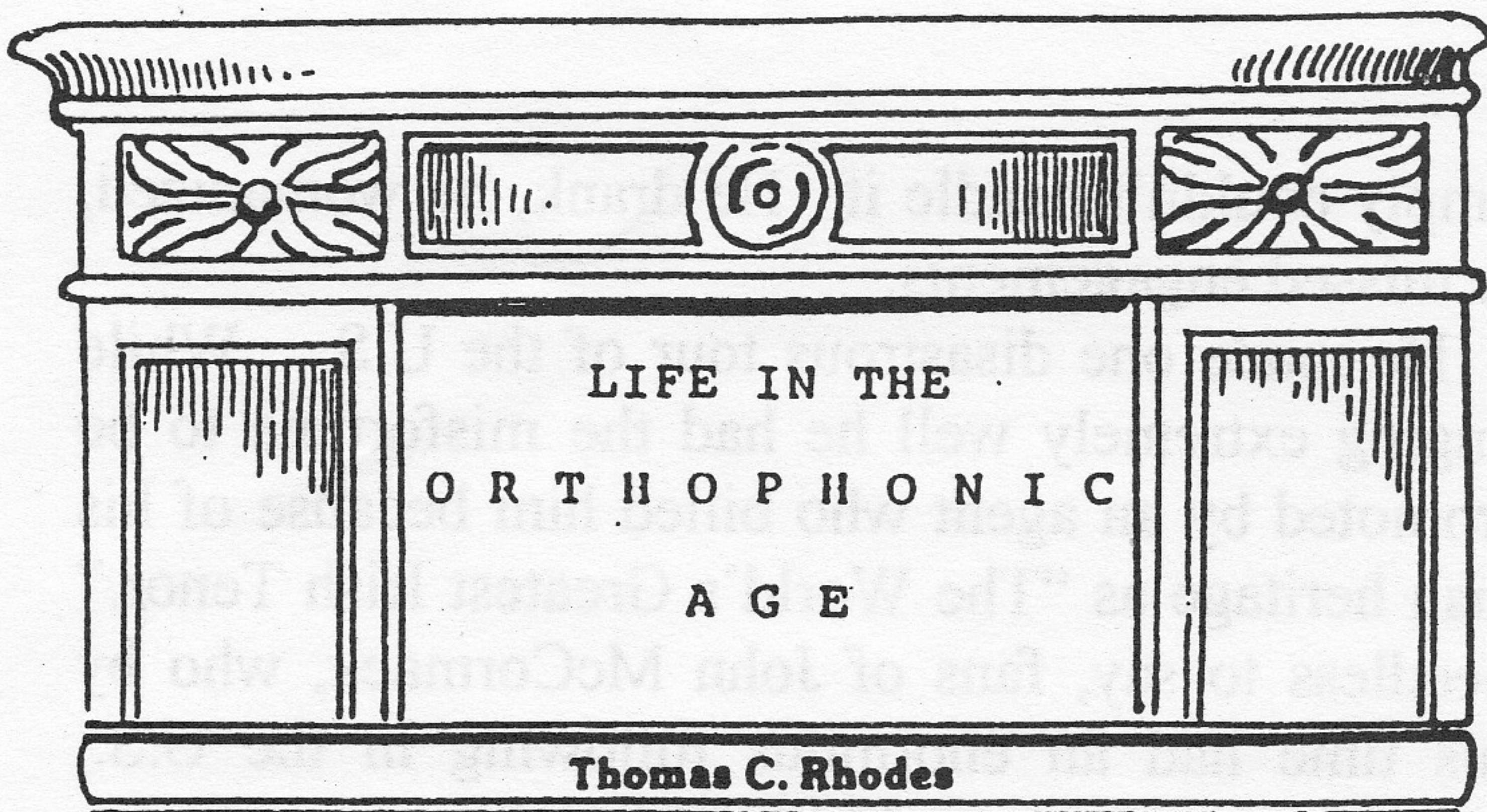
His records were made on English Columbia, American Columbia, Imperial, and Broadcast Twelve. I recommend them all. Each one has something to tell us of the man who truly could have been the second Caruso.

### U.S. Columbia Records by Tom Burke

Killarney	463-D &
Kathleen Mavourneen	33007-F
Don't Wait Too Long	520-D
Let Us Waltz as We Say Goodbye	
The Snowy Breasted Pearl	536-D
I'm Sitting by the Stile, Mary	
Lo-Nah	560-D
Teach Me to Smile	
The Minstrel Boy	33027-F



Tom Burke



## A BALANCED LOOK AT WESTERN ELECTRIC

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= Part 5 =

Work progressed quickly on the actual recorder. It was basically a question of adapting the principles of the Crandall electro-magnetic recorded to the mechanical disk cutter. The first instrument subjected to study was that very unit used in the unhappy try-out of 1912, at the behest of Chief Carty. Later other mechanical cutters were bought for testing. Maxfield made various changes in the course of his development work, including the use of rubber damping instead of the adjustable spring dampers used by Crandall. The amplifier adapted to drive the cutter was taken from the Colpitts type units then being readied for public address work. However, while the amplifiers worked on the same principles, those used for public address had only three pre-amplifier stages, being meant for carbon transmitter input in one model (work on the wide frequency double button carbon mike was being done by Western's Warren C. Jones at this same time); while the disk cutter amplifier, intended for use with the already perfected Wente condenser mike, needed no less than six pre-amplifier stages! It was a problem with circuit noise and hum being fed into the cutter itself that prompted project heads Craft and Colpitts to come up with an unheard of remedy. Craft had his wire fabrication experts make special, costly purpose built platinum wire and connectors just for this work. It should be mentioned that the disk cutter from this Maxfield team was designed from the first to operate at a variety of speeds, including 33 and standard 78 rpm. The cutter for the "Vitaphone" system was not merely a "slowed

down" version of the commercial record disk machine. Both grew out of studies on groove velocity and reproduction quality conducted for the possible motion picture usage. The synchronization work of sound and film actually took more time to perfect than the recorder, since there had been no history of the use of movie cameras and projectors at 463 West Street. This development pertains more to film history than the subject of this article.

It must be brought to the reader's attention that from the first, the Western Electric disk system was designed for electrical reproduction. All of the earliest horn studies began well before Karl Darrow noted the Webster paper on exponential horns, not printed in a journal until 1919, were undertaken for the forthcoming magnetic loudspeaker, not a mechanical reproducer. The work principally of Henry Egerton of the Western staff, was of the balanced armature type, of very rugged construction, and based on the much earlier work of Thomas Watson. Horn research turned to the exponential type due to the fact that the Egerton driver was intended for the relatively high Colpitts amplifier output, all of great use in public address. It was Harrison, working from the earlier H. D. Arnold notes, who came up with the idea an exponential horned analogous mechanical reproducer.

From July 31, 1918 to July 31 of the following year, the U.S. government actually took control of all wire and wireless communications in America, including AT&T. Military communication took all precedence in research and manufacturing -- much more control than that exercised on Victor! Perhaps without World War I and the government takeover, electrical disk recording could have been submitted for patent protection in 1918 or even earlier! There is no doubt that the war and "the Feds" most likely pushed the disk project and Vitaphone back a year or two.

Before the winter of 1919, the small Maxfield team had finished their work on this first, pioneering the electro-magnetic cutter, which, in its later guises would serve both for commercial disk waxing and the making of large disks for the upcoming Vitaphone project. It must be stressed that the cutter was hardly the whole project and itself depended greatly on the earlier work of Irving Bardshar Crandall on the oscillograph. For instance, Colpitts and his assistant F. A. Hubbard designed all of the circuits, most of the

(cont. page 14, lower right column)

C u r i o s i t y

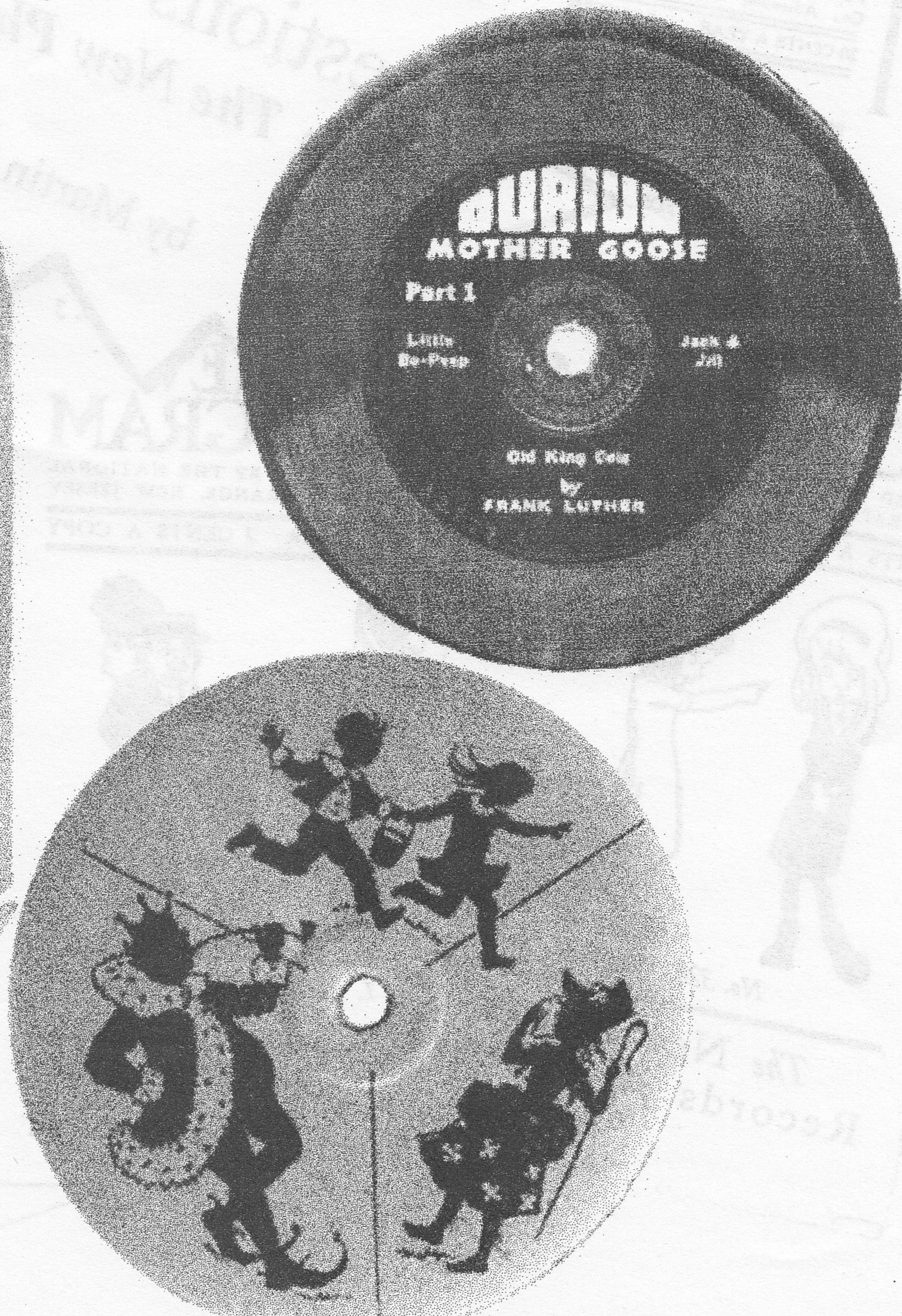
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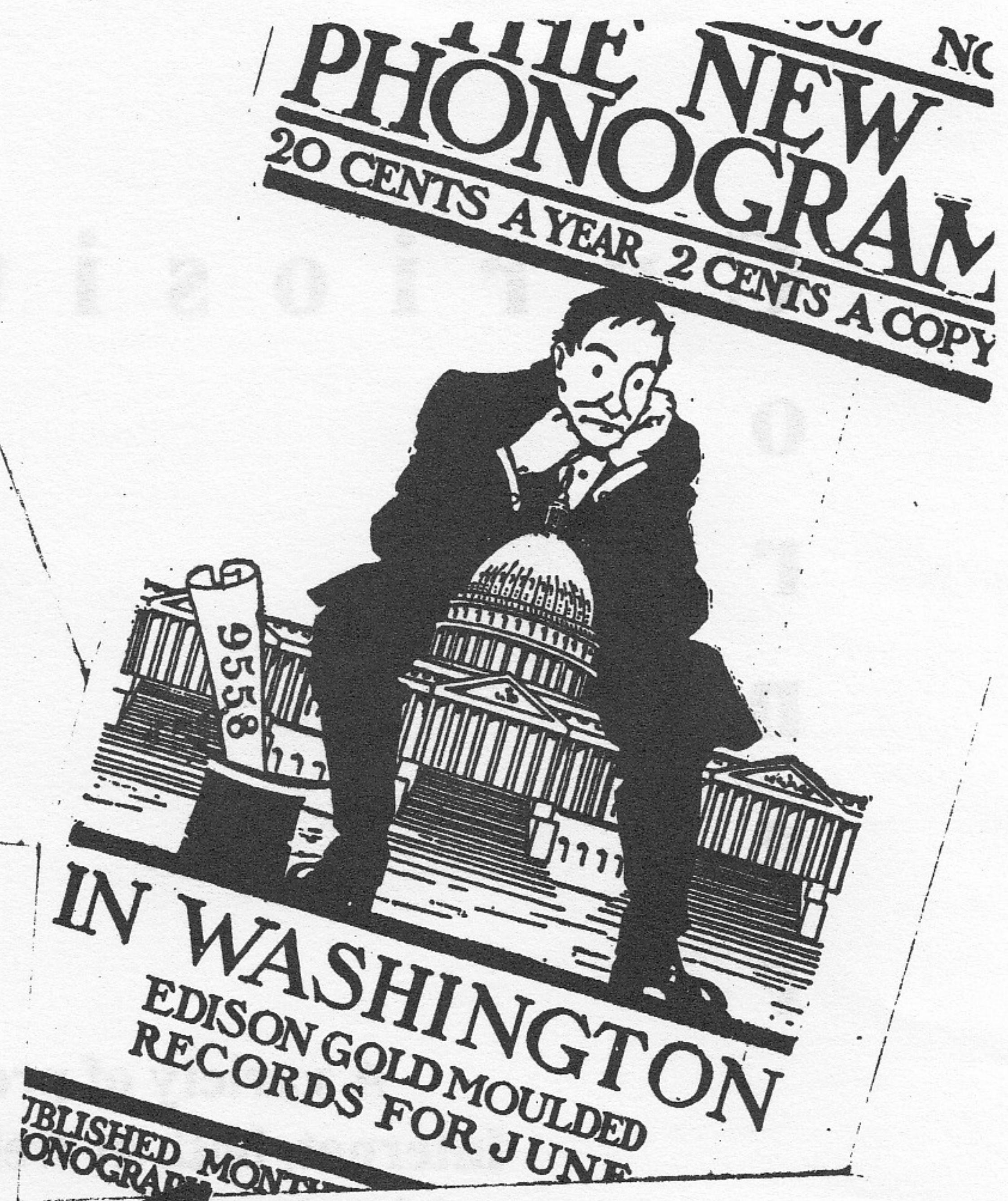
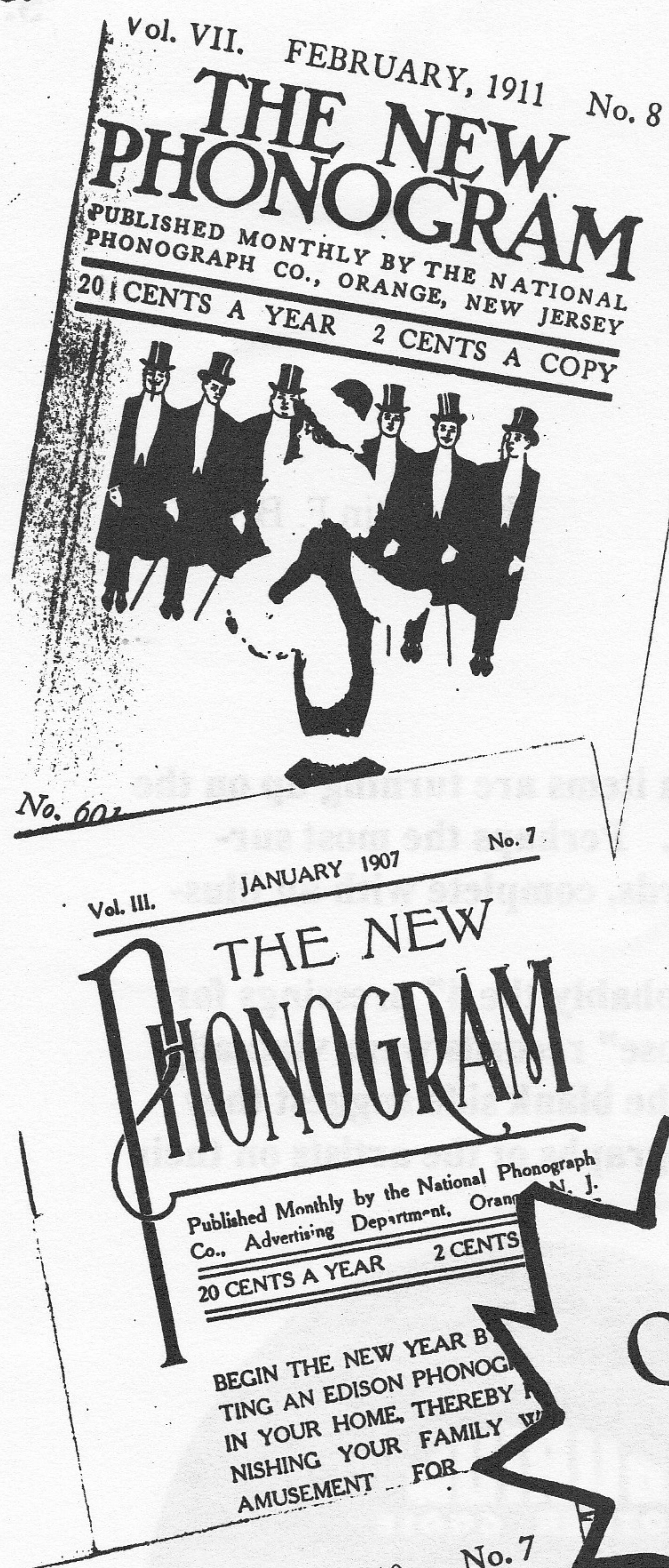
## "A Durium Surprise"

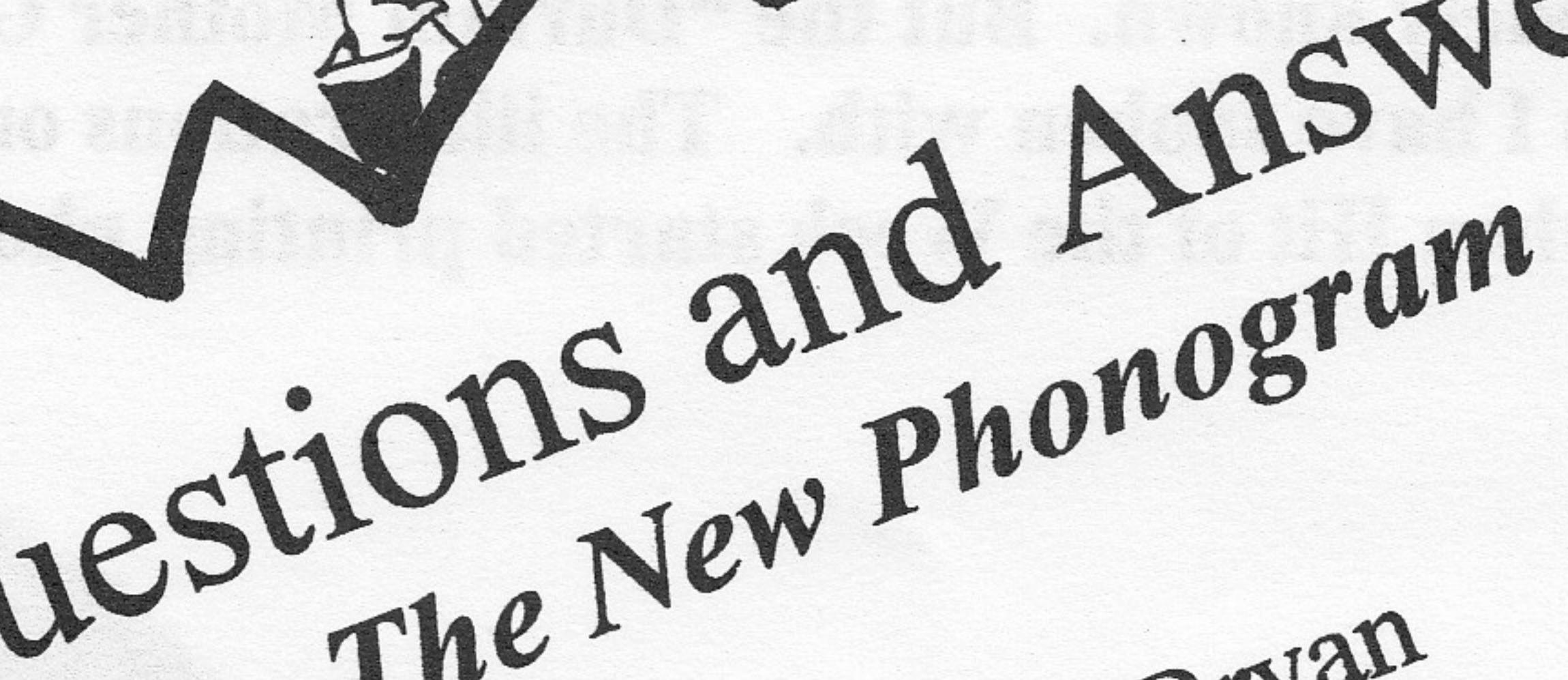
by Martin F. Bryan

A variety of previously undocumented and unknown items are turning up on the Internet, both at websites and sales venues, such as eBay. Perhaps the most surprising in recent months was a set of six 4" Durium records, complete with an illustrated container!

Miniature Durium products are familiar to most collectors...probably the 4" pressings for Chevrolet are the most widely known. But the "Durium Mother Goose" records were virtually unknown to the collectors I have spoken with. The illustrations on the blank side suggest they were produced in 1932, when Hit of the Week started printing photographs of the artists on their regular issues.





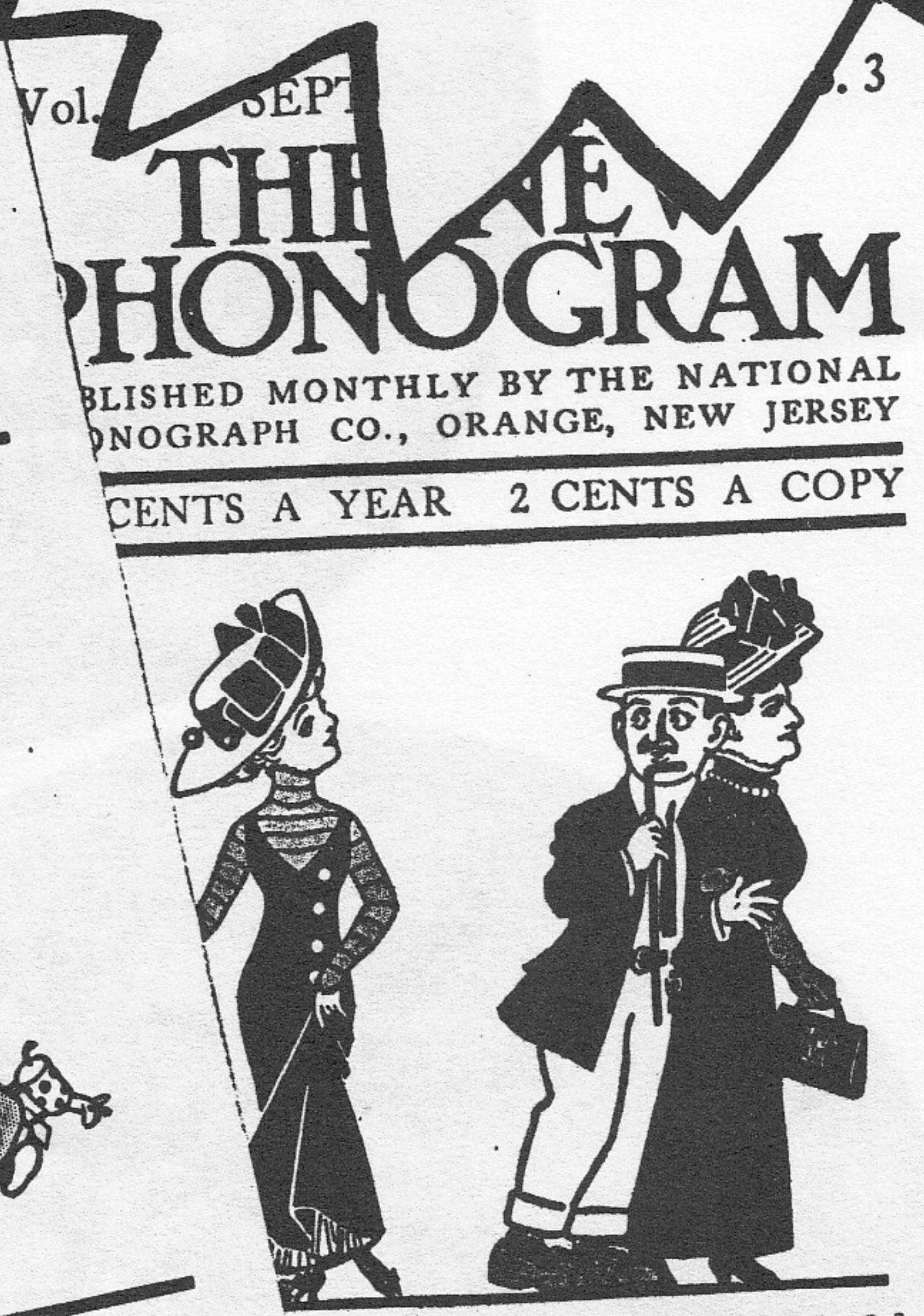


# Questions and Answers in The New Phonogram

John E. Bryan

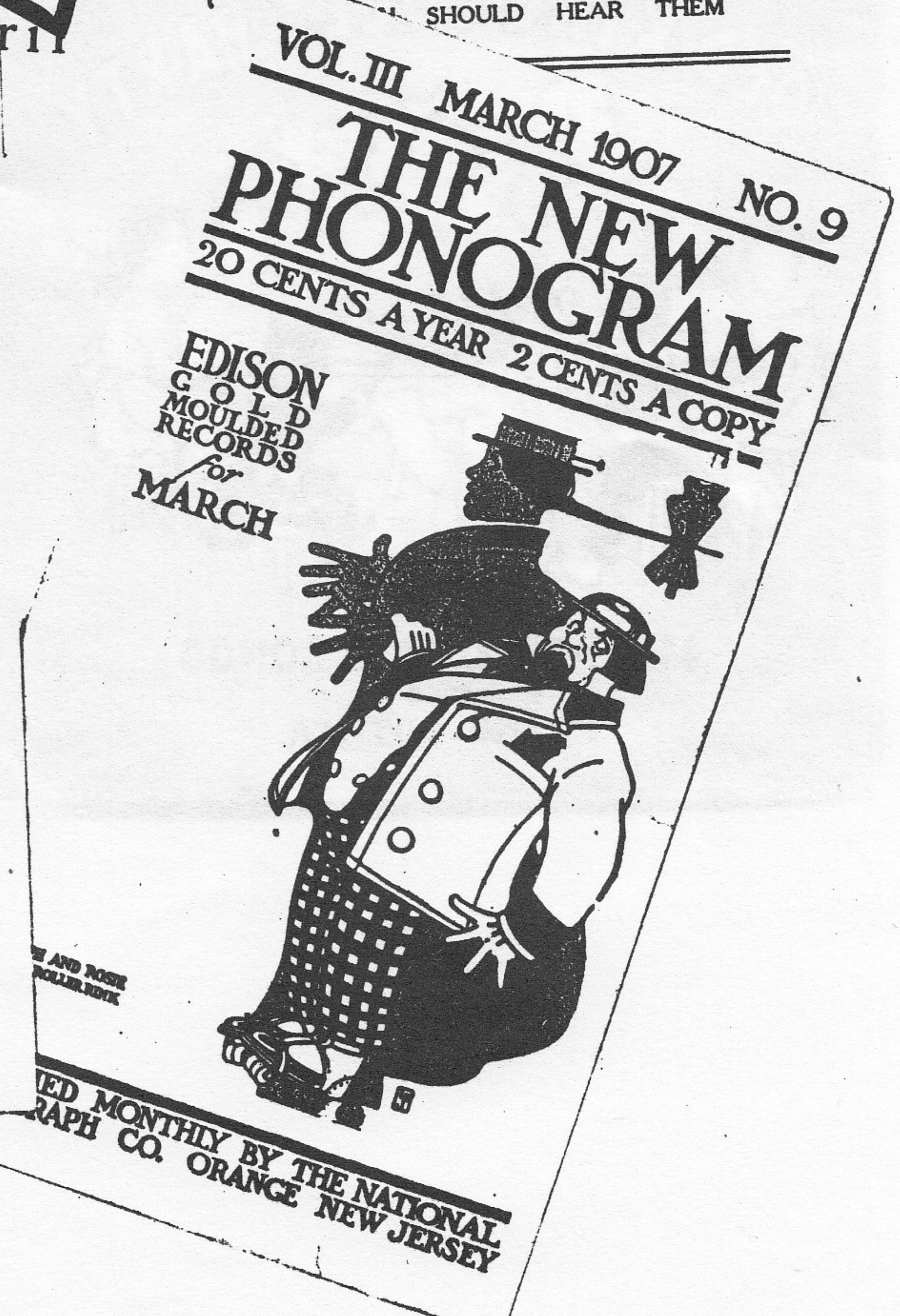
by Martin F. Bryan

**AUGUST 1906**



No. 320.

# The New Edison Records for January



## Introduction

**The New Phonogram** was a small publication ( $3\frac{1}{2} \times 6"$ ), usually numbering sixteen pages, begun in 1904 for Edison customers. Although a modest 20 cents was requested for a year's subscription, I suspect that many dealers supplied the little magazine free of charge to good customers. Each issue naturally contained a listing of the latest records, complete with full descriptions, information detailing new equipment, poetry, artist photos, etc., as well as a regular Q & A department.

At first glance, one might suspect the *New Phonogram* editor himself was responsible for the questions: "Is there a better reproducer than the Model C?" "Will temperature affect the Phonograph?" "What size horn is best?" But soon the reader realizes these are all genuine questions — some are humorous, some are interesting, and some seem down-right naïve to us at the end of the Twentieth Century! Readers regularly asked about Ada Jones, the identity of the Edison announcer, and Mr. Edison's age.

Answers were often to the point, curt, and sometimes even insulting... especially during the period of the Phonograph's peak production. They were also occasionally informative and helpful. I have culled several gems from all of these categories for your enjoyment.

### November-December 1904

J.G.R., Allentown, Pa. — Please inform me what distance from the horn to stand while making a male duet record. Also the distance for a quartette.

for the same reason. It is impossible to lay down a hard and fast rule as to distance, for much depends upon the character of the voices and the skill of the singers in varying the distance from the horn to suit the high and low notes. Every master record made by us requires hours of experimentation to get good results. The amateur must do likewise if he hopes to succeed. It is about as easy to tell an amateur how to make a good Phonograph Record as it is to tell him how to make good photographs.

S.W., New York City — Why is it that Edison Records are not made longer than four inches, so that longer selections may be recorded on them?

all owners of such machines. A longer Record could be made in addition to the present one, but as long as the demand for the present type continues to exceed the capacity of our factory, it is not probable that such a change will be considered. It would seriously complicate the manufacturing situation to do so.

[Customers were frequently asking for longer-playing Edison records, which was not remedied until the introduction of the Amberol cylinder in 1908. -Ed.]

### March 1906

A.P.R., Ozone Park, L.I. — What is the significance of the small figures found on Edison Records on the blank space at the end?

In making a solo record the singer should stand from five to eight inches from the horn. Two singers must stand a little farther away to get good blend and also because of the greater volume of two voices. A quartette must stand still farther back

To put out a materially longer record would make it necessary to manufacture an entirely new Phonograph upon which to play it. A longer record could not be played on any of the standard types of Phonograph now in use and would work a hardship on

They are a factory designation and have no significance of interest to the public.

May 1906

B.M., Coxsackie, N.Y. – Why are some of your Records in boxes with cotton on the inside and some are not?

J.B., Potsdam, N.Y. – Why are not your records made a half inch longer, so as to play one more verse, for they would work all right on the machines now made?

necessary to scrap special machinery, etc., worth hundreds of thousands of dollars and spend an equal or larger amount in new machinery. Up to the present time we have not been able to find a Record making composition that is not affected by the temperature, nor can we yet make Records that will not vary slightly in the diameter of the bore. The extra space that to the uninitiated seems so available for more verses is, therefore, absolutely necessary to allow for temperature changes and variations in the bore. The blank space at each end of a Record, which numerous correspondents have thought could be utilized for additional words or music, is also a manufacturing necessity.

July 1906

T.H., Cleveland, O. -- Do you allow visitors to go through your factory?

this takes nearly a half day's time of an employee whose services are otherwise needed, it would seriously interfere with other work if we had many visitors to entertain. Consequently we limit this privilege to those having business claims on us.

August 1906

A.H.R., Chicago – I wish to ask whether or not Records should be made in rooms without furniture or hangings, in order to insure proper loudness and clarity of tone. I have tried to make some vocal and instrumental Records in my own parlor with only fair success, the tones lacking in the above qualities. Is an ordinary fourteen-inch horn suitable for making Records, or should a larger horn be used, or one of the regular recording horns?

Up to August, 1904, our records were wrapped in cotton before being placed in boxes. Since then all Records have been packed in special boxes that do not require cotton.

If records could be made of a material that would not expand or contract with the changes in the temperature, and they could all be made with precisely the same bore, then it might be possible to make them a half inch longer. Even then it would be

necessary to scrap special machinery, etc., worth hundreds of thousands of dollars and spend an equal or larger amount in new machinery. Up to the present time we have not been able to find a Record making composition that is not affected by the temperature, nor can we yet make Records that will not vary slightly in the diameter of the bore. The extra space that to the uninitiated seems so available for more verses is, therefore, absolutely necessary to allow for temperature changes and variations in the bore. The blank space at each end of a Record, which numerous correspondents have thought could be utilized for additional words or music, is also a manufacturing necessity.

We do not encourage the public in their desire to visit our factory. The principal reason for this is because it cannot be done without a guide, and as

In making master Records at our own Recording plant, we do so in a room devoid of all carpets or hangings and containing only such furniture as is necessary for the use of the people making Records. We should not, however, regard such conditions necessary for amateur Record-making. An ordinary fourteen-inch horn is fairly good for home Record-making, but we would recommend a horn made like our regular recording horn, which is thirty inches long and made perfectly straight, tapering from five-eighths of an inch at the machine to six inches at the wide opening.

September 1906

J.E.M., Vernon Center, N.Y. – Who is the lady that sings "Blue Bells" in Record no. 8736, "Two Rubes at the Vaudeville"?

Miss Daisy Boulais

Has anyone a right to use other cylinder Records on an Edison machine?

You have the right to do as you please with your own machine, but you will get the best results by using only Edison Records.

O.S., East Orange, N.J. –

[I don't know whom "O.S." inquired about, but possibly it was Henry Burr, who used the name "Irving Gillette" on Edison. -Ed.]

J.W.A., Lambertville, N.J. – Why do you not produce the "American Patrol" as a xylophone solo, on which instrument it is much desired? Why don't you make a Record of "Yankee Doodle," played by the band, introducing its various instruments?

Mrs. A.F.E., Tomahawk, Wis. – Why do you not make Records of harp and pipe-organ music, or harp and violin, with pipe-organ accompaniment? Why not more piano records?

that the real reason was because we controlled a piano factory and did not want to ruin the business by putting out piano Records.

Why do you not make over some more of your old Records, such as 14, 30, 68, 71, 79, 93, 95, 120, 561, 502, 589, 7418, 7532, etc.

### October 1906

T.A.L., New York City – Who are the members of the Ossman Banjo Trio?

H.K., Gallion, Ala. – How can I remove dust from Records that have a thick coating on them, like rust?

[This is the first indication of what is evidently mold on Edison cylinders – a problem which is still discussed in 1999! -Ed.]

R.B., Greenough, O. – (Will you ever make a Record of) "McGinty"? It seems to me that "McGinty," sung by S. H. Dudley, would excel any Record ever made.

### November 1906

G.B.B., Maxwell, Col. – Should Records be kept in an ice-chest in summer time?

C.E.S., Springfield, Mass. – What time should questions reach you to be answered in the following month's *Phonogram*?

The singer named sings under a *nom de plume*.

We cannot assign any reason to the public why we do not make Records of various songs or compositions or by special combinations of talent.

Questions of this kind can only be regarded as suggestions.

We cannot answer these questions. We once stated in this department that the reason we did not make more piano solos was because the piano did not in our judgment make a good record. A reader immediately wrote that this was a mere subterfuge;

Largely because other and newer selections seem to promise larger sales, and sales are what we are in business for.

Messrs. Ossman, Hunter and Farmer.

If you are sure that it is dust brush them carefully; if it is something that has got below the surface it cannot be removed without injuring the Record.

"McGinty" is... looked upon as a "has-been," and unless, like roller-skating, its popularity is revived it is not likely that we will ever make a Record of it.

No.

We cannot undertake to answer questions in the *Phonogram* within six months after they are received. This is because we have at all times 100 or more on hand to be answered and can only answer a few of them each month.

**10.**

E.D., New York City – Are you going to make new machines with six inch Records so we can have the whole composition of the songs? Can you not omit the announcements on the Records and have a longer selection of music?

The editor of the *Phonogram* has no knowledge of this company's intention to make a machine of this kind, for some time at least. From what we know of the preference of the public in this matter of announcements on Records we think it best to continue them. The space gained by omitting them would not be material.

[Columbia had been producing six-inch cylinders for about a year and a half. -Ed.]

N.M., New York City – What are the first two lines of the second verse of the sacred selection, "The Ninety and Nine"?

See a Moody and Sankey hymn-book.

D.L.S., Youngstown, O. – Do you have to sing or play into each Record separately?

No; all standard size records sold are made from moulds.

January 1907

H.J.M., River Rouge, Mich. – Did Arthur Collins ever live in Detroit, Mich.?

Not to our knowledge

C.S., Joseph's Mills, W. Va. – Are there any Records made of celluloid?

Yes, but not by this company. They are not a commercial success.

[The reference is to Lambert; Indestructible had not yet gone into production. -Ed.]

C.W.W., New Madrid, Mo. – Who is the lady singer in the chorus of the song "Down in Blossom Row"?

Miss Daisy Boulais, who also sings in Records Nos. 8736, 8395 and 8601.

L.L.D., DuPont, Ga. – Can a concert Record be played on a Home (Phonograph)?

No.

March 1907

W.J.J., Woodland, Col. – I have an harmonica Record made by a local person. Is there any way to make it keep its tone? It has been made about a year, and it is losing its tone already. Can it be preserved, and if so, could you tell me how? It is an exceptionally loud one and the only one I have ever heard.

There is no way of preserving the tone of the Record you refer to, unless you stop playing it. It loses its tone, because it is made of soft wax, and it wears a little every time it is played.

A.R.C., Nevada, Ia. – An Edison dealer told me that Arthur Collins used to travel and sing for a medicine show, and that he was at Maxwell two weeks with the show. I claim that it was not the Arthur Collins that sings for the Phonograph. Which is correct, the dealer or I?

You are.

April 1907

B.C., Denver, Col. – Why is it we pay thirty-five cents for Records in Denver while a Chicago firm sells them by mail order for twenty-five?

N.R., New York City – My Record "The Laughing Song," No. 4004, has a piano accompaniment, while in your catalogue it is under the heading of orchestra accompaniment. How is this?

May 1907

J.N., Troy, N.Y. – Is W. H. Thompson, who makes Edison Records, the same gentleman who in 1899 married Miss Isabel Irving?

S.T., Duluth, Minn. – Why don't you make your Gold Moulded Records longer, so as to play a little longer?

June 1907

H.L.G., Tracy, Iowa – Will you ever take old records in exchange for new ones again, as you used to?

July 1907

Mrs. T.L.H., Brookfield, N.Y. –

part, either in these columns or by mail. If the *Phonogram* was six times its present size it would not be large enough to do so. Nor can we employ a special force for the purpose of replying by mail. It would require a large force, for more than a million Phonograph owners could ask for more of this kind of information in a day than twenty people could supply in a week.

H.J.B., Philadelphia –

care of our Recording Department, 79 Fifth avenue, New York City. Most of them are busy people and have little time to answer letters referring to trivial subjects. Remember, also, that postage stamps cost money and that most of our artists can dispose of their incomes in other ways than buying stamps to answer letters that are of no interest to them.

A.A.A., Kansas City, Mo. – I heard from one of your jobbers last week that Ada Jones and Len Spencer were married to each other, if so, please give me date of same.

They cannot be Edison Records, for no one is permitted to sell Edison Records for less than thirty-five cents.

Your Record of "The Laughing Song" was probably made some time ago. In making over all of our Records we make them with orchestra accompaniment, and the one now in our catalogue was made later than yours.

No.

They are as long as can be played on the present types of Edison Phonographs. Longer Records would require machines with longer mandrels and stronger mechanism(s).

It is not likely, they are now too cheap to expect us to do it.

As we have repeatedly stated, we cannot undertake to print the words of our Records in whole or in part, either in these columns or by mail. If the *Phonogram* was six times its present size it would not be large enough to do so. Nor can we employ a special force for the purpose of replying by mail. It would require a large force, for more than a million Phonograph owners could ask for more of this kind of information in a day than twenty people could supply in a week.

We cannot give the home addresses of our artists. Important letters may be addressed to most of them care of our Recording Department, 79 Fifth avenue, New York City. Most of them are busy people and have little time to answer letters referring to trivial subjects. Remember, also, that postage stamps cost money and that most of our artists can dispose of their incomes in other ways than buying stamps to answer letters that are of no interest to them.

Both Ada Jones and Len Spencer are married, but not to each other.



## IN REVIEW

(Reviews are by the *Graphic* editor unless identified otherwise)

**The Columbia Master Book Discography, (1901-1934) by Tim Brooks and Brian Rust.**

Where to begin?? Well for starters, it is absolutely amazing that this set ever saw the light of day! The thought that more than thirty years of U.S. Columbia's domestic output would be published in one fell swoop is truly amazing. As such, *this is the first major U.S. discography to be published in many years!!* At first glance this 4-volume set is deceiving in size until one realizes it consumes nearly 2400 pages,

Due to its scope, it is appropriate to devote more space than usual in reviewing this work. Since there are definite divisions between volumes, I think it makes sense to analyze the volumes separately.

Vol. I: U.S. Matrix Series 1 through 4999 (1901-1910). Tim Brooks begins the first book with a detailed and interesting history of Columbia itself, going back to 1888, but concentrating on disc production, which began in 1901 with the first "Climax" label. Columbia's struggles as the second leading disc company (as well as the second leading cylinder producer) are fascinating; Brooks details failures (such as the Marconi flexible disc) and coups (the double-disc record of 1908), and many of the company's rises and falls in the marketplace – culminating with the company's sale to the American Record Corp. for a paltry \$70,000 in 1934. There are some surprises to be discovered here, such as Columbia's near merger with Paramount Pictures in 1929.

Tim Brooks also includes an analysis of the repertoire, a look at Columbia executives, descriptions of the records and the numbering system, plus a variety of label illustrations.

The bulk of Volume I, however, is the amazingly detailed discography of Columbia's first ten years of disc production, both 7" and 10". To begin with, the early Climax masters had to be remade when the "Columbia" label was introduced in 1902. And because early production techniques were primitive, masters were frequently remade and remade; all known takes, artists, and issue variations are shown.

Popular titles, such as #60, "The Holy City," were recorded by a variety of artists (in this case, Harry Macdonough, then Albert Campbell, then Henry Burr) in the two sizes. During this period when Columbia was producing for a variety of labels, all known issue variations are given. An example would be #3248, "A Rescue by the Lifeboat Crew," which went through several takes and appeared on Columbia, Harvard, Marconi, Regal (British), Diamond, Harmony, Standard, and Columbia-Rena. Consequently, there are tens of thousands of variables listed for Columbia's first 4999 master numbers.

The majority of this portion of the book is based on the lifelong research by the late Bill Bryant, who was devoted to documenting as much about these discs as was humanly possible, in the absence of original company files. It is a pity that he did not live to see his efforts finally in print!

One major surprise which pops up in the body of the discography is that in 1909 Columbia began producing vertical-cut masters of many of its new recordings! What were they anticipating? Even Edison had not begun vertical disc recording this early.

Appendices include dating charts, a world-wide chart of acoustic matrix series, interesting notes covering various series (including trials and personals), a fascinating listing of known disc record catalogues, etc., etc. Yes, there is also a title index, as well as a numerical label index, which is especially helpful when trying to trace later and "client" pressings to their original issues.

This book stands on its own very well, but it is unknown whether or not the publisher will sell single volumes from the set.

Vols. II & III: Principal U.S. (10") Matrix Series, 1910--1934, by Brian Rust. Here is the meat of most collections of early Columbia records, popular and classical, organized chronologically by matrix numbers! These two volumes document Columbia's output during its rise in the Teens to its near disastrous fall in the Depression.

When Columbia reached #4999 in 1910, they switched their main matrix block to 19100; then to advancing series of five-digit blocks, until inaugurating the 140000 series in 1924. Rust follows a strict numerical progression through the various series in the two volumes (5-digit blocks in Vol. II, 6-digit in Vol. III). Again, issue numbers are shown, but usually just for the principal U.S. issue. Recording

dates and locations (if outside New York) add to the discography's usefulness. Each volume has an artist and title index as well. An indication of the amount of material included is that these two books together contain over 1500 pages!

There is a wealth of wonderful material documented here, including some fascinating names of recording artists who remained unissued (Fred Watson, who recorded "The Mad House Rag" in 1912; Elsie White, Sam B. Hardy, to name a few). Since all genres of music are documented here, the listings run the range from classical to popular to country to "race" recordings. Here, documented in one place, are Columbia recordings by Efrem Zimbalist, Ramon Blanchard, and Anna Case; Arthur Fields, Ben Selvin, and Bert Williams; Samantha Bumgarner and Riley Puckett; Bessie Smith and Barbecue Bob... truly encyclopedic! Collectors of historic recordings will be surprised to see that Columbia recorded six sides of Lindbergh's 1927 reception in Washington; perhaps they could not get permission from NBC to release them to the public as Victor did.

Vol. IV: U.S. Twelve-Inch Matrix Series, 1906-1931, by Rust and Brooks. Rounding out the series of four we find twenty-six years' worth of the 12" recordings in one volume. Columbia's variety of 12" issues tend to be a lot less interesting than Victor's, but there are still many hidden gems in the pages of this volume. Sadly, domestic recording of 12" masters dropped off drastically during the "Viva-tonal" period.

The format is much the same of the other three volumes, but only the 30000-30999 block has detailed release number information. The label index covers just the acoustic releases before the introduction of the -D and -M series.

It is nice to see Columbia finally getting its due, and it took years of research and false starts to get to this point. By the way, a nice feature of all four volumes is that the authors have included composer credits for most titles – no small feat of research in itself!

With all this information now accessible, it is hard to be critical; but I wouldn't be doing a balanced review if I didn't point out some of the set's drawbacks.

First and foremost, at nearly \$400 (about a hundred bucks a book), the series has been priced out of the reach of so many collectors. One hopes that many

large city and university libraries will add this to their shelves, but it is doubtful that most small towns could justify spending \$400 for a subject as obscure as early Columbia records.

Secondly, there is a large amount of domestic material not included here, most notably the U.S. made ethnic masters (fortunately, these have largely been documented in Dick Spottswood's Ethnic Music on Records). The only "private" recordings shown are those which fell in the regular matrix blocks, but even some of the special recordings that were issued in the "A" series (notably, ten sides by Bryan and Taft) are not here. Neither are a raft of sides recorded by Prince's Band and Orchestra in various ethnic blocks. The only 1920s Harmony issues shown (aside from a few earlier masters) are those from the 140000s and 150000s; the various other 6-digit electrical recordings, including the long-playing blocks, the Ben Selvin non-vocal alternative masters, are not shown. Neither are several other 6-digit blocks used by Columbia. I do acknowledge that the compilers had to draw the line somewhere, or else the set would probably never have been finished, and/or the resulting cost would have been prohibitive for all! The main point here is that the set does not give a complete look at the entire scope of Columbia's domestic recording program, as its title might imply.

Thirdly, the two main Rust volumes were apparently based largely on Columbia files and old Chmura lists – not the recordings themselves. This is why he usually shows just one domestic issue per master, whereas the Brooks portions show all known issues world-wide!

Regrettably, there is no numerical listing of catalogue numbers as in the Brooks sections, thus making it difficult to locate the matrix numbers for thousands of releases.

Another fault with the Rust volumes is that they were evidently typed manually, and not always very well. His pages are full of typos, white-outs, strikeovers, etc., while Brooks used a computer. Comparing the two is like comparing typeset to mimeograph! One is compact and easy to follow, the other crams too much on a page with no variation in type. This points out the problem of having two discographers working an ocean apart on two different sections of the same work (and with two very different sets of standards for layout, date format, etc.).

Rust's volumes have numerous errors and omissions. A small sampling: several of the acoustic

masters which were made for the "educational" series have their issue numbers missing, as do many ethnic recordings made in the regular series; Edna Fischer wrote "Some Day Soon" – not Fred Fisher, and the title is "Someday Soon"; Truly Shattuck is misspelled in the artist index; Billy Murray has two numbers shown incorrectly after his name; the vocalists for Whiteman's "Last Night I Dreamed You Kissed Me" and "Evening Star" are shown as "unknown," yet a quarter of a century ago Rust knew who they were in The American Dance Band

Discography! Issued takes for mxs. 45641 and 45642 are both shown, yet no issue numbers appear; most single-sided classical issues show no release number, though later -D and -M number reissues are shown; mxs. 47443 and 77507 were issued (in Canada); the original Columbia issue for 77364 is not shown... only its Harmony reissue is; Marion Harris is accompanied by Paul Biese's "Orchfsrta"; 78161 was issued as Eugene Buckley, not Arthur Fields; "Mr. Gerrard," the well-known Ambassador to Germany

(mx. 77666), had a first name (James), and his last name is spelled Gerard; Redfern Hollishead gets changed to "Hollinshaw"; Vernon "Falhart" did not record "Our American Girl"; Harold Lambert did not use the pseudonym "Rodman Lewis" on Harmony 644-H; several sides by Fields and Hall are credited only to "Eddie Younger."

*The Graphic* is certainly not exempt from errors and omissions! But considering Brian Rust's and the publisher's high standards (as well as the set's price), there are just too many.

The only error I caught in all of Tim Brooks' work was in identifying the majority of the Star 12" releases (the 1200 block) as Standards.

When all is said and done, however, this is still a pretty amazing work to have available!

The Columbia Master Book Discography (ISBN 0-313-21464-6) is published by Greenwood Press at \$395.00. More information can be obtained either via their toll-free number (1-800-225-5800) or at their Internet site: [www.greenwood.com](http://www.greenwood.com)

## HERE & THERE

Compiled for *The Graphic* by Luzern Huey

Our search for high-numbered Edison Concert cylinders (see issue #103) has netted a few interesting results:

9061 - Violette – Harlan & Stanley

9273 - Then You'll Remember Me – Myra Price

9378 - Champagne Gallop – Edison Concert Band

The owner says that #9378 is a very dark brown cylinder (almost black) and plays with wonderful fidelity. This number was originally issued in October 1906. Can any readers furnish higher numbers?

Ron Dethlefson reports hearing from a collector with an Edison Concert machine in a banner-style cabinet, serial # C11945. He wonders if this might have been a later mechanism installed in an earlier-style cabinet. While we're taking the Concert survey, then, let's see if there are other machines numbering above 10,000.

Long-time New England phonograph dealer Ralph Woodside has decided to retire from the business, and most of his inventory has been liquidated. Friends may reach him at: 4 Wharf Drive, Groveland, Mass. 01833. We wish him the best for a happy retirement.

(cont. from page 4)

controls, the monitor speakerphone tap and the phase/time compensation circuit with its "artificial lines." Crandall himself had designed the input jacks, transformers and filters for the connection of the condenser transmitters (first submitted by E. C. Wente for patent protection on December 20, 1916). The development of the Wente-Crandall condenser transmitter could be the subject of another article.

This in no way is meant to take away from the work of Joseph P. Maxfield, who masterminded, among dozens of important advances, the mathematical basis for the Vitaphone disk, in addition to radio broadcast equipment, sound studios and even a hearing aid.

(to be continued)

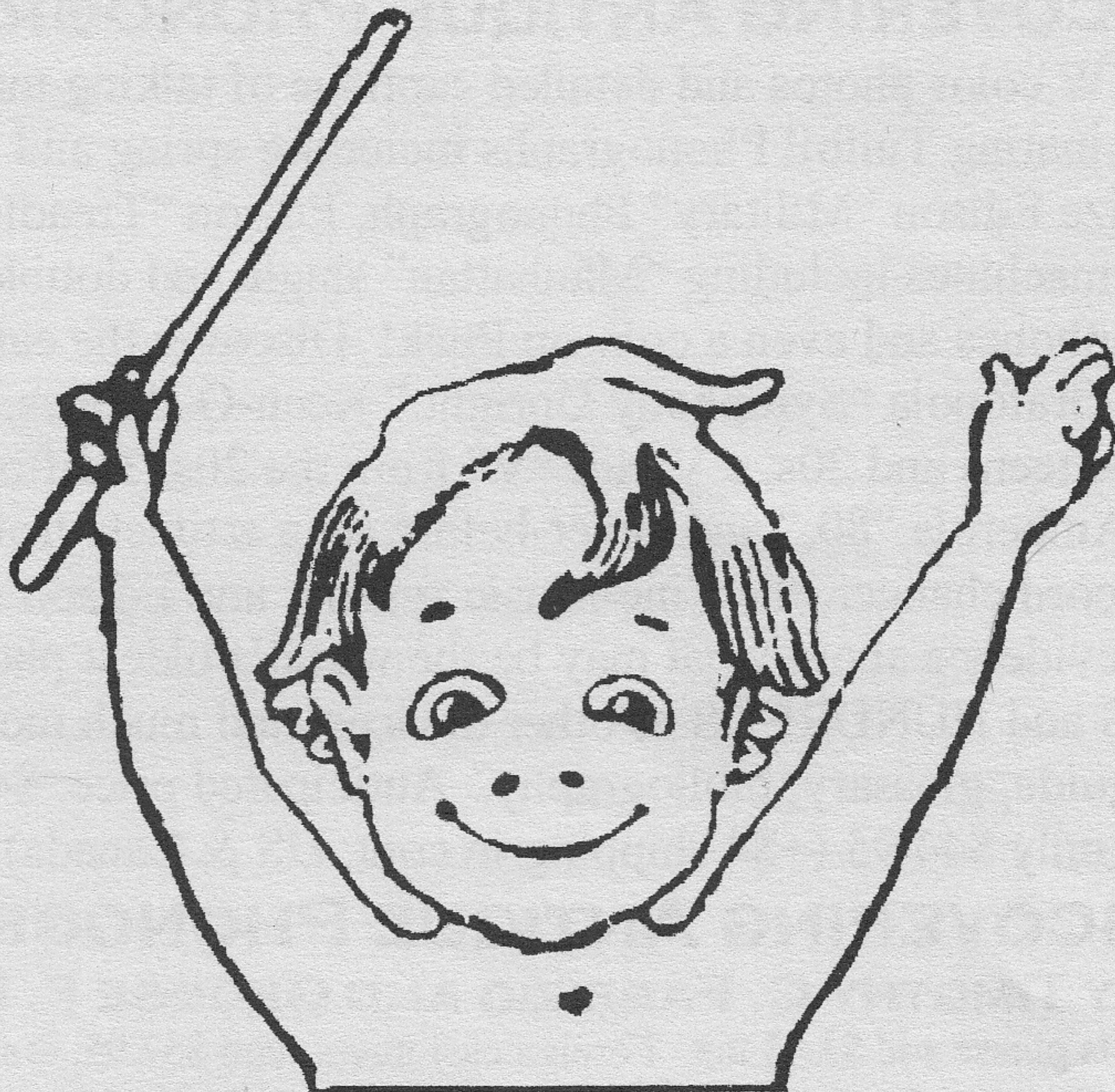
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(January 1899)

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